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MERCER ISLAND, WASH.
GUNRUNNER

A former Castle Rock school teacher under indictment for gunrunning in Pakistan is teaching science at Mercer Island High School.

Eugene Ray Clegg, 36, was hired at the school last September, school district officials confirmed. They said the decision has worked out well.

Clegg, who is free on \$100,000 bail while he awaits a federal appeals court decision that could determine if he will ever go to trial, contends the U.S. government approved of his activities in Pakistan.

The teacher was mysteriously whisked out of Pakistan a year ago after he was arrested there in September 1982, convicted of gunrunning, fined and sentenced to 10 years' hard labor.

Clegg confirmed he is teaching at the high school but refused to discuss details of his case. Most of what has been published, he said, "has been fictionalized," but he declined to give his version.

The teacher said he was a "political prisoner" in Pakistan and was imprisoned with doctors, lawyers, journalists and teachers, "the cream of the country." He said he was tortured during the first of six months he was held.

He is teaching, Clegg said, to earn money to pay relatives and lawyers for his legal bills. The government has seized his bank accounts.

The circumstances of his return from Pakistan and transfer to U.S. federal marshals have never been fully disclosed. At the time of his arrest, Clegg was employed as a teacher for children of U.S. Embassy officials in Islamabad.

He responded to an advertisement in landing his Mercer Island teaching job. Bill Bleakney, school district personnel officer, described Clegg as "charismatic" and the best of those who applied for the job.

A check of records in Olympia uncovered some unexplained lapses in Clegg's record, Bleakney said.

"When we asked him if there were things he needed to share, he volunteered" information about his legal troubles, Bleakney said.

"He was sprung by certain factions -- I assume it's the CIA -- right after he was sentenced (in Pakistan)."

Clegg indicated part of the deal for his release was that he would have to face U.S. charges upon his return, said Bleakney.

The district decided to hire Clegg, he said, in part because there was a shortage of qualified teachers in physics, electronics and physical science -- the subjects taught by Clegg.

"The staff was very, very impressed" with Clegg, Bleakney said.

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The teacher was originally hired as a substitute at \$50 a day and later signed to a contract that was applied retroactively and is worth just more than \$26,000 for the school year.

District officials said they discussed Clegg with "all parties concerned." But Assistant U.S. Attorney Jerry Olson, who is prosecuting Clegg, said no one contacted him.

Clegg's case is in limbo while the government appeals a ruling by U.S. District Judge Barbara J. Rothstein requiring the government to turn over certain documents. Defense attorneys contend the documents will bear out their theory the U.S. backed Clegg's activities to aid Afghan rebels fighting Soviet troops by smuggling weapons through Pakistan.

U.S. prosecutors maintain Clegg was motivated by personal profit and charge he salted away about \$100,000 in gunrunning proceeds in a Bahamas bank account.

The federal indictment claims Clegg illegally exported firearms from Jackson International Airport to Pakistan between Aug. 20, 1981, and Aug. 18, 1982. He was arrested in Pakistan after authorities there intercepted a consignment of arms that Clegg allegedly mailed to himself and concealed in crates marked "musical instruments."